

**U.S. Department of Justice**

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*Eastern District of Virginia*

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**NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced that Dion Antonio Smith, also known as "Big D", age 33, of Exmore, Virginia, was sentenced to 151 months in federal prison in the U.S. District Court in Norfolk today on a charge of conspiracy to distribute marihuana, powder cocaine, and more than five grams of crack cocaine on the Eastern Shore. Smith was arrested on a federal complaint in Accomack County in October, 2003. He pled guilty in November, 2003, to a criminal information charging him with the drug conspiracy.

The original federal charge arose out of arrests of Smith and others on March 19, 2003, in Northampton County. Smith initially faced cocaine and marihuana related state charges in Accomack County. The case was referred for federal prosecution under Project EXILE.

The evidence introduced in court showed that Smith and others were involved in the distribution of powder cocaine, crack cocaine, and marihuana. At the time of the arrests by State Police and agents of the Eastern Shore Drug Task Force, officers seized over 47 grams of crack, 415 grams of powder cocaine, 22 pounds of marihuana, and \$14,700. Although Smith had no firearms when arrested, others in the conspiracy did carry firearms.

Project EXILE is a multi-agency joint federal and state task force targeting armed criminals for prosecution in federal court for possession or use of firearms in violation of federal laws. It is a part of Project Safe Neighborhoods, a nationwide effort by the Department of Justice aimed at reducing violent crimes. Since its inception in Hampton Roads in late 1997, Project EXILE has produced 801 convictions and removed over 1462 firearms from armed criminals.

The charges against Smith were investigated by the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and U.S. Customs agents and task force agents working with the Virginia State Police and the Eastern Shore Drug Task Force. The case was prosecuted for the United States by Assistant United States Attorney James A. Metcalfe.

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